


GURIOS  
AND  
COLLECT / 316

DRAWER 12

SPRINGFIELD

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# Illinois Springfield

## Curios & Collectibles

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

75 (SPRINGFIELD, ILL.). Annual catalogue of instructors & pupils, Young Ladies' Institute, Springfield July, 1851. Springfield, 1851. 12mo printed wrp., pp. 16. A deletion on p. 8 removing one name was perhaps made at time pamphlet was issued. The ten members of Board of Examiners include Hon. A. Lincoln, Hon. S. T. Logan & Hon. Aug. C. French. \$20.00  
Van Hornes Book Co 9-1930

## Mementos Of 1909

# Two Forgotten Glasses Recall Vintage Banquet

So long as he never washes it, William A. Steiger of 1517 Carolina Ave., has a brandy glass which he can value over any set of priceless stemware.

It has achieved its value, in fact, because it hasn't been washed since it was last used 55 years ago.

The little glass, still showing the smudge which is all that remains of the brandy it once held, is one of a pair which were used Feb. 12, 1909, when Springfield marked Abraham Lincoln's 100th

birthday.

The long-vanished brandy was served to Robert Lincoln, son of the martyred President, one of the chief guests at the gala banquet served in 1909 to 750 guests in the old state arsenal.

Served to 750 male guests, that is—about 1,300 guests, mostly women, were permitted in the galleries of the gaily bunting-trimmed old arsenal, but they didn't get to eat — just to watch. (The men thoughtfully did cover the floor with white fabric to protect the ladies' gowns, though).

Chief speaker at the festivities was William Jennings Bryan, the famed golden-tongued orator, whose banquet subject was "The Royal Art of Government." Earlier in the day he had discussed Lincoln as an orator, noting carefully that Mr. Lincoln's

other talents had overshadowed his great oratorical abilities.

There were 36 ushers chosen for the banquet. Among them was George K. Willer, then about 18 years old and a state house page. When the dinner finally concluded, after the food, the speeches, the toasts and a musical program by the Illinois Watch Factory band, Willer with presence of mind "saved" the glasses of Robert Lincoln and Bryant. And to be sure of the authenticity of his souvenir, he scratched a rough "B" in the bottom of Bryant's glass, while that used by Lincoln he simply allowed to remain as it was, stained, but otherwise unmarked.

Willer kept the glasses for the rest of his life. When he died about 14 months ago his family gave them to his long-time friend, Steiger.

Steiger, now retired after a long career in the U.S. postal service (during which he made his first airplane trip with Charles A. Lindberg, then a postal service pilot), has been a Lincoln student most of his life. He estimates he has written more than a million words on Lincoln and has published some articles on him.

What will happen to the little brandy glasses now?

"Well," says Steiger with a chuckle, "I'm a collector, and they're part of my collection now. I don't expect them to go anyplace else." Meanwhile, one thing is certain; one of those two little glasses is definitely no candidate for the detergent and the towel.



made for the proposition that the Kennedy-Johnson foreign relations record

## Foreign Policy Issue

LYLE C. WILSON:



## He "Salvaged"

climb stairs before they eat in of back fat and increase the ham

JAMES KELLER

e Worthwhile

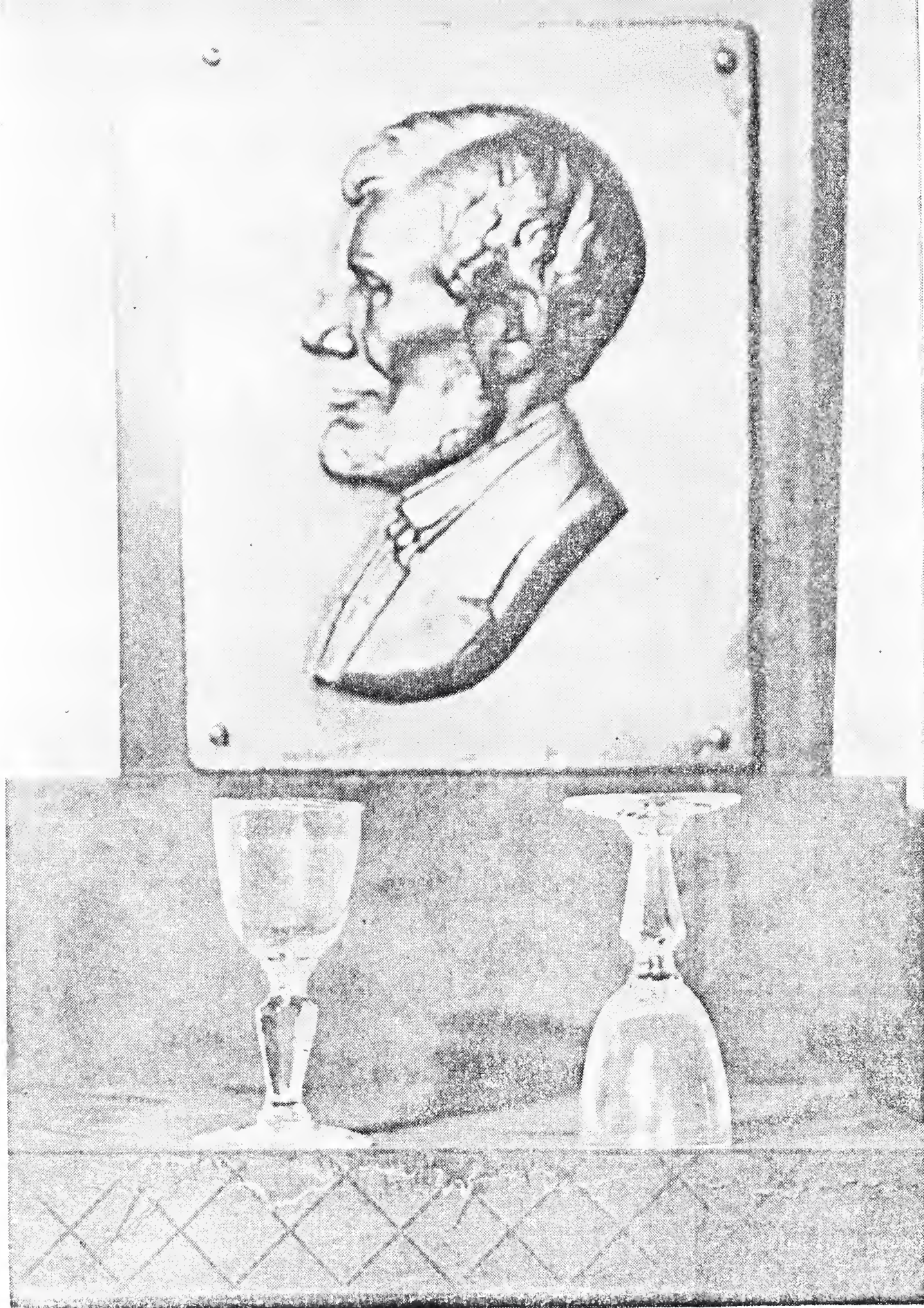
A DAY:

Soviet island hopping plans and also spelled out in detail what would happen in Tanganyika and elsewhere in East Africa. It has happened. Nevertheless, the State Department calls all this also a surprise.

asked their Herbert Matthews to verify this. Matthews spoke by telephone directly with his contacts in the Havana hierarchy. They spiked it. Yet, astoundingly enough (it certainly astounded the editors of The New York

chief of Castro's Nunez, Cleto and Victor Avila, Ce-





The glass at left was used by Abraham Lincoln's son, Robert, during a banquet in Springfield 55 years ago honoring the Great Emancipator's 100th birthday. The one at right, turned down, was not used by teetotaler William Jennings Bryan, one of the chief speakers. Both are now owned by William A. Steiger of 1517 Carolina Ave. The plaque of Lin-

coln behind the glasses was acquired by Steiger about 30 years ago and was made by a University of Pittsburgh student. The wood on which it is mounted came from the old Ninian Edwards home, long associated with the martyred President. — Staff Photos by Richard Binetsch.





# Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.  
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the  
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

February, 1979

Number 1692

## LOUIS A. WARREN LINCOLN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM IS RECIPIENT OF BARONDESS/LINCOLN AWARD

The Civil War Round Table of New York has this month honored the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum with the Barondess/Lincoln Award. The award is given each year for "contribution to the greater appreciation of the life and works of Abraham Lincoln." Mark E. Neely, Jr., accepted the award at the meeting of the Civil War Round Table on February 14th at the 7th Regiment Armory in Manhattan.

The Round Table noted that 1978 marked fifty years of service as a "respository of Lincoln . . . artifacts and a . . . library on the subject" for the Lincoln Library and Museum. It noted also the institution's acting "as a clearing-house of information on Lincoln." *Lincoln Lore*, first issued in 1929, is now sent "monthly free of charge to six thousand schools and universities, historical societies, Lincoln scholars and collectors" and "is the accepted authority in the matter of bibliography of printed materials on Lincoln." The Round Table mentioned as well the R. Gerald McMurtry Lecture, which "brings to Fort Wayne an outstanding Lincoln scholar to speak on some new aspect of research in the field."

The Barondess/Lincoln Award was established in 1962 in memory of Dr. Benjamin Barondess of New York, a charter member of the Round Table and the author of several works on Lincoln. Barondess was a member of the New York Bar, a graduate of Columbia College and the New York University

Law School. Lincoln students know him as the author of *Three Lincoln Masterpieces: Cooper Institute Speech, Gettysburg Address, Second Inaugural* (Charleston, West Virginia: Education Foundation of West Virginia, Inc., 1954). The Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum contains three other pamphlets by Barondess: *The Gettysburg Address: Revealing Facts About One of the "Supreme Masterpieces" of the English Language* (Reprinted by permission from the *Autograph Collectors' Journal*, Spring Issue, 1952, Vol. IV, No. III), *Lincoln's Cooper Institute Speech* ([New York]: The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc., 1953), and *The Adventure of the Missing Briefs* ([New York]: The Civil War Round Table of New York, Inc., 1955).

The first recipient of the Barondess/Lincoln Award was author Neil Harris. Last year Stephen B. Oates gained the award for *With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln*. The Civil War Round Table honored Louis A. Warren with the Barondess/Lincoln Award in 1965, and now it honors the institution which bears his name. The staff of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum is most grateful to the New York group for noticing our "contribution to the greater appreciation of the life and works of Abraham Lincoln." Lincoln students everywhere appreciate the efforts of this Civil War Round Table to stimulate work in the Lincoln field.

## "PIG IRON" AND THE GENESIS OF A LINCOLN CAMPAIGN MEDAL

Although museums and collectors have hotly pursued the medals and buttons associated with Abraham Lincoln's campaigns for the Presidency, they have generally had more success in acquiring the medals than in describing the specific circumstances of their production and use. Hardly any form of information is more difficult to come by than that which links these solid artifacts with the men who produced them and the politicians who encouraged their use. The historians who are most familiar with the letters and political literature of the period have shown little interest in the material political culture of Lincoln's day. Collectors and museum curators spend their daily lives amidst the remains of that political culture, but they tend to have little time to cultivate the broad familiarity with written sources necessary to explain the uses of the artifacts. This article is a very modest attempt to bridge that gap in the case of one Lincoln campaign medal.

In the Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, there is a letter written by William Darrah Kelley of Philadelphia to Norman Buel Judd which gives a brief glimpse of the circumstances which produced a campaign medal. Kelley, who ran successfully for Congress the year of Lincoln's first election to the Presidency, was a Democrat turned Republican and a free trader become protectionist. In Kelley's long career in Congress after this first successful run, he became so strongly identified with tariff protection for Pennsylvania's iron and steel industries that he was nicknamed "Pig Iron." Judd, another Democrat turned Republican, was a member of the Republican National Committee, Chairman of Illinois's State Central Committee, and, most important, a close political advisor of Abraham Lincoln in the



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Campaign medal, AL 1860-12.



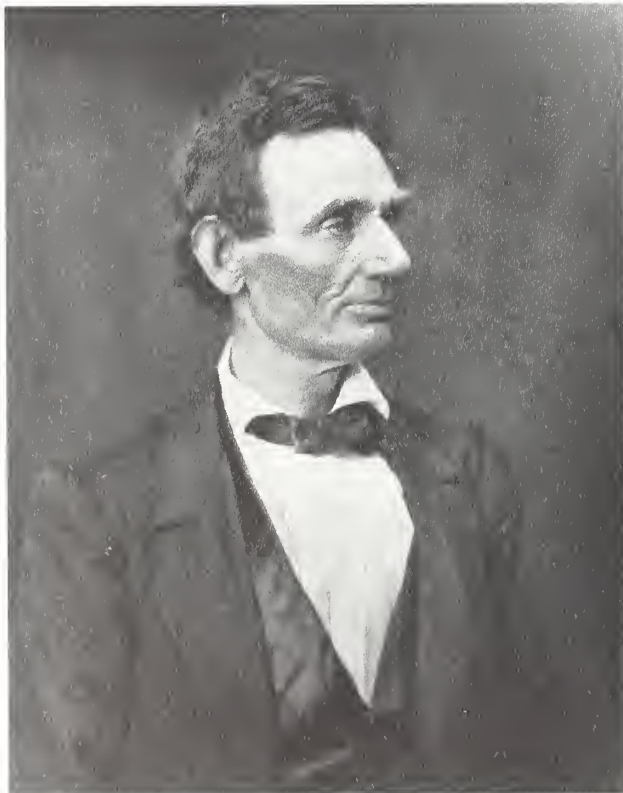
1860 campaign.

On June 1, 1860, Kelley wrote Judd from Philadelphia, telling him, "A townsman of mine, a clever artist in his line — is very anxious to get out a medal for campaign use with a faithful likeness of Mr. Lincoln. To do this requires a perfect profile and for this he has applied to me." Pictures of the surprise nominee of the Republican party were evidently scarce in the East. "Can you send me one — A reliable *profile* — or if you have none can you induce Mr. Lincoln as a favor to me, or for the good of the cause to have one photographed," Kelley asked. "I hereby transfer my commission to you not doubting that it will be faithfully executed at your earliest convenience." Kelley added, "I will cheerfully honor a draft for the cost & trouble as I believe it will result in a creditable work." Kelley's letter then concluded with a report on the exceedingly good political prospects for the Republican cause in Pennsylvania: "... the good old Keystone state is no longer in the category of doubtful things."

On June 6th the diligent Judd wrote "Friend Lincoln," enclosing Kelley's letter and reminding the Presidential nominee that Kelley "was with the party that visited you to notify you of your nomination." Judd explained that he sent Kelley's letter "not . . . so much on account of the picture proposition as that you may know his views of Penn., and that your over zealous friends may let well enough alone." However, Judd did comment on the "picture proposition": "The picture although troublesome to you, when requested by such a person as Judge Kelley ought to be attended to — Every little [bit] helps, and I am coming to believe, that likenesses broad cast, are excellent means of electioneering."

For his part, Lincoln not only read the political news from Pennsylvania but also attended, apparently, to the "picture proposition." The envelope from Judd bears these words in Lincoln's hand: "Judge Kelly [*sic*]. Profile." In another hand is written, "Answered."

Lincoln had received the nomination on May 18th, and there was no abundance of photographs of the candidate from which to choose three weeks later, when Kelley's letter arrived. However, the candidate had posed for a series of photographs in Springfield three days before Judd's letter was written. The four photographs taken by Alexander Hesler on June 3, 1860, included one which was nearly in profile. Per-



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Hesler's near-profile photograph of Lincoln.



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. Campaign medal, AL 1860-33.

haps this is the one Lincoln sent Kelley for his medal-making constituent (see FIGURE 2). There are two campaign medals listed in J. Doyle DeWitt's *Century of Campaign Buttons, 1789-1889* (Hartford: privately published, 1959) which were struck in Philadelphia and seem to have been based on the Hesler photograph. One (No. AL 1860-12 in DeWitt's book) was engraved by William H. Key and, says DeWitt, "undoubtedly was based upon the photograph of Lincoln made by Hesler in Springfield on June 3, 1860." The reverse of this medal bears the inscription: "THE PEOPLES/ CHOICE/ 1860/ LINCOLN & HAMLIN/ FREEDOM/ &/ PROTECTION." The other (No. AL 1860-33), engraved by Robert Lovett, Jr., of Philadelphia, misspells Lincoln's name as "ABRAM" on the obverse, and bears the inscriptions on the reverse: "FREE- DOM & PROTECTION, LINCOLN & HAMLIN" and "THE/ MAN THAT/ CAN SPLIT RAILS/ OR GUIDE THE/ SHIP OF/ STATE."



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. This campaign medal, struck in Waterbury, Connecticut, may have been based on this profile photograph (inset).





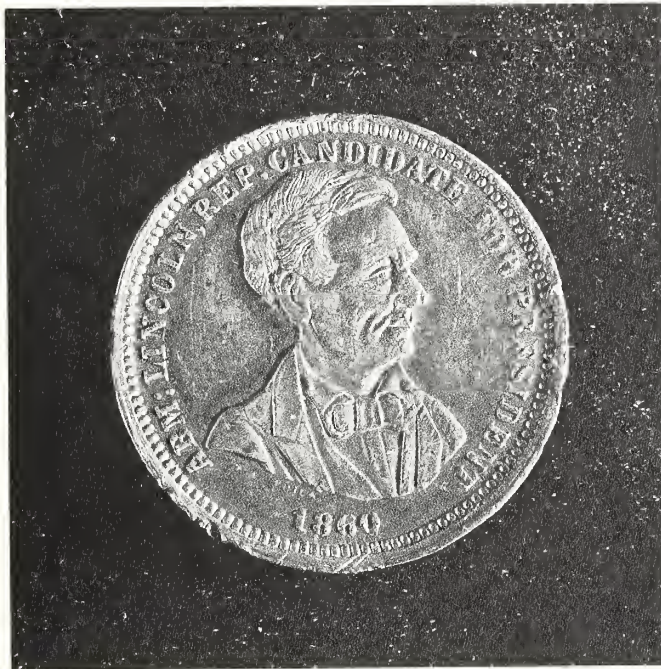
From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 5. Reverse of campaign medal, AL 1860-12.



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 6. Reverse of campaign medal, AL 1860-33.



Both photographs from the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURES 7-8. Another possible candidate for the medal struck by William D. Kelley's constituent is the one shown above (obverse and reverse). J. Doyle DeWitt identifies the medal as AL 1860-51. It was struck by Robert Lovett of Philadelphia. Like other Lincoln campaign items from tariff-mad Pennsylvania, this one urged "PROTECTION TO AMERICAN INDUSTRY." Here the tariff appeal was combined with the slogan "FREE/HOMES/FOR/FREE MEN." The latter slogan combined the idea of homestead legislation (free homes) with the heart of the Republican idea, free soil (free men). Winning Pennsylvania was a key to Republican success in 1860, and Lincoln's "sound" record on the tariff was essential. When Lincoln selected his cabinet after the victory, rewarding Pennsylvania was crucial. One of the arguments used by supporters of Simon Cameron's bid for a cabinet position was that it would reassure Pennsylvania's high-tariff men, especially if Cameron were made Secretary of the Treasury. Unfortunately for Cameron, he had a reputation for corruption and dishonesty, and the idea of associating Cameron with the Treasury was more than many Republicans could stomach. Some found the idea of any association of Cameron with "Honest Abe" repulsive, but in the end Cameron became Secretary of War.

One other Lincoln campaign medal (identified by DeWitt as AL 1860-47) called for "PROTECTION TO/HONEST/INDUSTRY." Its place of manufacture is unknown, but all other pro-tariff campaign medals identified by DeWitt came from Pennsylvania. Issues changed in 1864, and only one medal mentioned the tariff. It was, of course, made in Philadelphia.



Until more is known about Kelley's constituent, the precise identification of the medal will remain in doubt. However, some modest conclusions can be drawn at this point. Both of the medals described above reveal Pennsylvania's obsession with the tariff, a preoccupation which Abraham Lincoln understood very well. In January of 1861, when President-elect Lincoln decided to offer the position as Secretary of the Treasury to Ohio's Salmon P. Chase rather than Pennsylvania's Simon Cameron, he explained to a political confidante, "But then comes the danger that the protectionists of Pennsylvania will be dissatisfied." Only the medals from Pennsylvania (and one the source of which is unknown) stress "Protection." Others deal with Union or free soil. It seems fitting that "Pig Iron" Kelley should have been midwife to the birth of such campaign materials.

It is instructive, too, to note the primitive state of campaign financing. Kelley was willing to pay out of his own pocket for the production of a photograph to aid the Philadelphia medal-maker. In fact, the nature of campaigning itself was not yet a matter of predictable public-relations techniques. Norman Judd served in the Illinois Senate from 1844 to 1860 and was a political wire-puller of long standing. Lincoln knew Judd's abilities very well, and, when he was having difficulty with excluding Cameron from his cabinet, he had "a great notion to post Judd fully in this matter, and get him to visit Washington, and in his quiet way, try to adjust it satisfactorily." As Chairman of Illinois's Republican State Central Committee and a member of the Republican National Committee from 1856 to 1861, Judd was a politician's politician, a man who surely knew how to run a campaign. Yet even Judd instructed Lincoln to see to the "picture proposition" largely as a favor to Kelley and was just "coming to believe, that likenesses broad cast, are excellent means of electioneering."

Historians are a little like Judd in that they are just coming to realize the significance of a broad range of campaign materials. Medals do have some political content; in 1860, Pennsylvania's campaign medals mentioned protection — others did not. Still, it is the general lack of content in such materials that is revealing. Judd, Lincoln, and Kelley attended to the medal matter in the crush of other important political business. Though historians stress issues in their studies of politicians, the politicians often preferred not to. Issues are divisive. Medals and pictures are not. Politicians ran "hurrah" campaigns, not debates on political science, and the great abundance of "hurrah" campaign ephemera is the best proof of the politicians' preferences.



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 9. William Darrah Kelley.

## LINCOLN AUTOGRAPHED DEBATES: A COPY PRESENTED BUT NOT SIGNED

*Editor's Note:* I am indebted to Grant Talbot Dean of the Chicago Historical Society for informing me of the existence of the book discussed in this article.

The Chicago Historical Society owns an interesting copy of the *Political Debates Between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas in the Celebrated Campaign of 1858, in Illinois* which bears this inscription: "James C. Conkling/Presented by/A Lincoln/April 7 1860." Harry E. Pratt did not list this copy in "Lincoln Autographed Debates," *Manuscripts*, VI (Summer, 1954).

James Cook Conkling (1816-1899) was a likely recipient of a free copy of Lincoln's book. Born in New York City, Conkling graduated from Princeton and settled in Springfield in 1838. Politics, profession, and matrimony soon forged a Lincoln-Conkling friendship. Conkling was, like Lincoln, a lawyer and a Whig in politics. In 1841, he married Mercy Ann Levering, the "Dearest Merce" of Mary Todd (Lincoln's) earliest known letters. In fact, Conkling's letters provide one of the more important sources for the Todd-Lincoln courtship, the gay social life of early Springfield, and the early appearance of Abraham Lincoln.

Conkling was a politician of some local prominence, being elected mayor of Springfield in 1844 and to the Illinois House of Representatives in 1851. Like Lincoln, Conkling became a Republican. He campaigned for Lincoln in Pennsylvania in 1860. When Lincoln became President, Conkling occasionally visited Washington as agent to handle Federal accounts for the State of Illinois. In 1862, he used his friendship with the President as an avenue to press for the selection of Mackinaw City rather than Michilimackinaw as a spot to be fortified for the protection of the Great Lakes. Conkling cited a number of arguments about the relative military advantages of the two sites, but he also admitted that he had invested some \$18,000 in Mackinaw City over the previous five years.

Students of Lincoln's Presidency know Conkling principally for his invitation to Lincoln to speak at a mass rally in Illinois on September 3, 1863. Conkling hoped that Lincoln would make a personal appearance, but from the start Lincoln leaned towards sending a letter to be read at the rally. Conkling, whom Lincoln thought "one of the best public readers" he knew, read the famous letter at the rally. Lincoln had cautioned him: "Read it very slowly." The letter defended the administration's policies of emancipation and arming Negroes as the best ways militarily to save the Union. Conkling was an ardent antislavery man, and he complimented the letter and hoped for the day when military success would leave "no question as to the condition and rights of 'American citizens of African descent.'"

Conkling wanted to visit Europe, and, in the summer of 1864, he pressed Lincoln for a European appointment. The President gave Conkling an introduction to Secretary of State William H. Seward, but nothing came of it. Conkling nevertheless continued to work hard for Lincoln's reelection and spurned the third-party movements which lured some other antislavery liberals away from Lincoln's camp. When Lincoln won reelection, Conkling pressed again for a European appointment, but the result was the same as in the previous summer.

There is no doubt of Lincoln's close personal relationship with Conkling. He referred to him at various times during the Civil War as "entirely trustworthy," as "my personal friend of long standing," as "a good man," and as "a particular friend & fellow townsman." Yet the Conkling presentation copy of the *Debates* is not autographed by Lincoln. Harry Pratt missed the Conkling copy, but he did note two similar unsigned presentation copies. John H. Littlefield, once a student in the Lincoln-Herdon law office, wrote in his copy: "J.H. Littlefield From A. Lincoln, April 25, 1860." And Charles J. Sellon, an Illinois newspaper editor, wrote in his: "Chas. J. Sellon Presented by Hon A. Lincoln." The inscription in the Chicago Historical Society copy is in Conkling's hand. It is written in ink; Lincoln wrote in ink in only one of the nineteen known copies he signed. It is dated; Lincoln dated only one of the copies he signed. The early April date would be approximately the time Lincoln first received his one hundred copies of the book from the publisher, and Lincoln was in Springfield on April 7th. Like Littlefield and Sellon, James Conkling failed to have Lincoln sign his copy of this famous book.



## Historic Illinois Trails to Lincoln country and cruises on the Mississippi



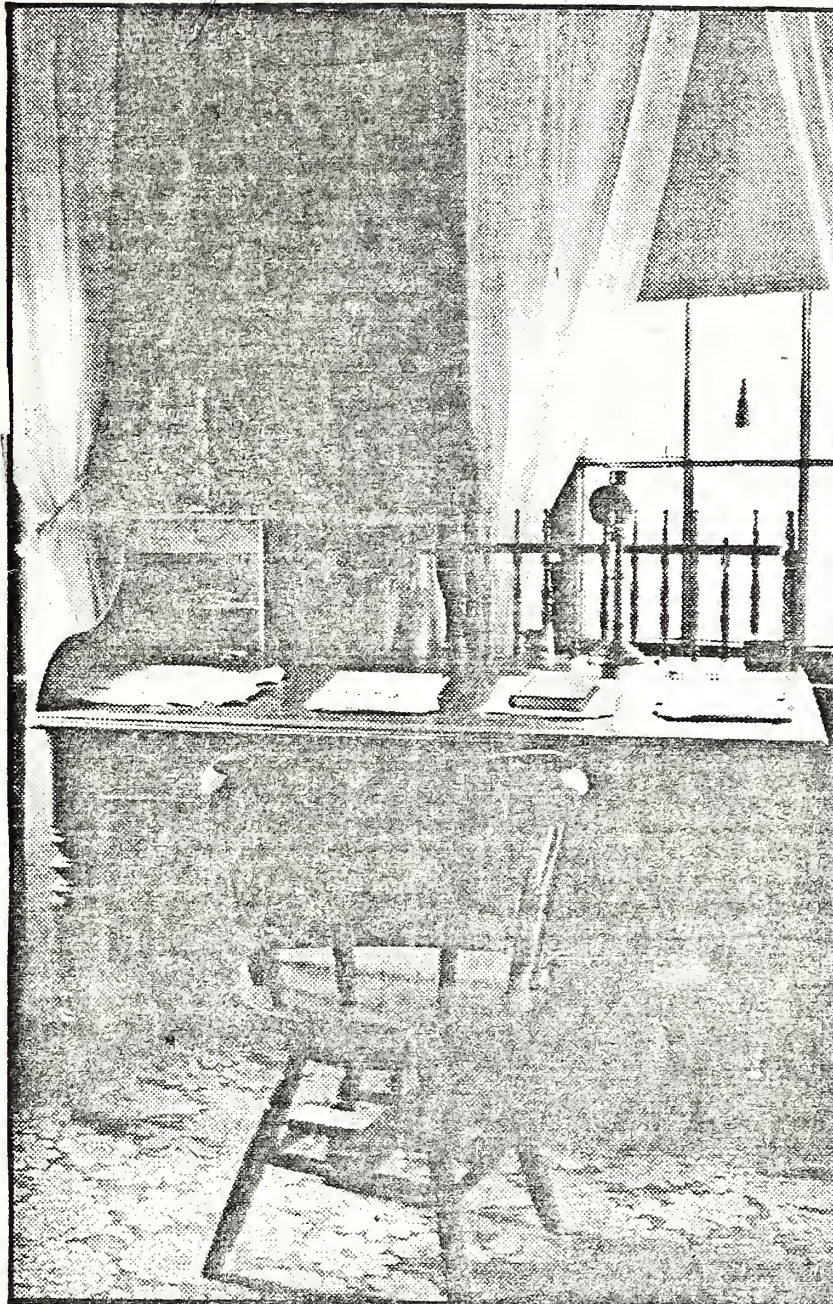
Chicago's metropolitan area being as large as it is, you've got to go at least a couple hours to get out of the area, but there are some destinations worth the trip. With a few odd corners of the state excepted, the expressways are excellent.

To the southwest, about four hours away, is Springfield, Ill., where in a quiet residential neighborhood on the north side is the tomb of Abraham Lincoln. Across a grassy mall is his statue and a cool marble tomb filled simply with Lincoln quotations. Down the hill behind is the simple little hut where the President's body was first placed — and briefly stolen.

About 20 miles northwest of Springfield, in the heart of Illinois's humid corn country, is Lincoln's New Salem State Park, a working prairie frontier village à la Williamsburg but including a steamboat ride on the Illinois River waters that Lincoln poled rafts on as a young man.

To the northwest, about three hours drive from Chicago, is Galena, the small-town reason why Chicago became such a big town — it is also the hometown of President Ulysses S. Grant. Take the Northwest Tollway that begins at the corner of O'Hare International Airport and at Rockford go west on U.S. 20, a four-lane divided highway that narrows to two lanes at Freeport. You'll pass through quiet old rural towns with their village square and past old red barns with faded "Mail Pouch Chewing Tobacco" signs.

The road twists through the countryside to Galena where, to plumb its riches of lead in the 1830's, prairie financiers built the first of what would become many railroads into Chicago. The little town is full of towering old trees and graceful Civil War-era homes, including the old Grant place. Ninety percent of the furnishings in the Grant Home are original and include many pieces, including the table service made specially for the Grants



David Plowden / Photo Researchers

### Lincoln's desk in his bedroom at Springfield, Ill.

and laid out in the dining room, used in the White House during the Grant administration. Visitors see 10 rooms, including six bedrooms (Open daily from 9 to 5; admission free.) Picnickers are welcome in the grounds.

Past Galena, about 15 miles along, is the edge of Iowa and Dubuque, a hot little industrial city that is also home to Robert's River Rides. There, for \$17.50 each, a romantic couple can ship out on a paddlewheeler any evening at 6:30 for a two-and-a-half-hour prime rib dinner cruise along the Mississippi River. There is some music for dancing, if the mood strikes.

At dusk, whether on ship or land, try to find a clear spot to watch the Western horizon for one of the prairie's natural delights, the kind of sprawling pink and orange sunset merged with deep and pale blues that can last an hour and stretch as far as the eye can see — which on the prairies on a clear evening is a mighty long way.

Robert's River Rides also has a Saturday moonlight cruise at 9:30 P.M., shorter Sunday morning trips at 10:30 and 11:45 and 90-minute daylight cruises daily at 2 and 4 P.M. Passengers see the muddy, tree-lined riverbanks that evoke thoughts of Mark Twain, dozens of pleasure boats and the long strings of river barges, larger than several football fields, that haul fuel into the heartland and efficiently drain its agricultural abundance off to the world's markets. For reservations, call 319-557-9200.

Andrew H. Malcolm.



City Room 1-3

# The Weekend Journal

The State Journal-Register

July 3, 1987

## LINCOLN ROCKS AT MIDNIGHT

*and other Springfield legends*





Continued from page 9A

canned creamed corn.

The shoe box was from Marshall Field's in Chicago.

The St. Nicholas Hotel closed in 1973. It was renovated and reopened as an apartment building in 1983. Paul Powell's suite was a victim of the renovation.

### FIRE HYDRANT DOME MODELED AFTER THE OLD STATE CAPITOL

The origin of this story can be traced directly. It started in "A City is Not Built in a Day," a graduate studies paper written by Tom R. Cavanaugh in 1949.

Cavanaugh was director of the Springfield Art Association from 1947-49. His paper was written for a graduate course in art he was taking at the University of Illinois. The story is told in a section entitled, "Dignity Comes to a Fire Hydrant."

Usually, only dogs come to a fire hydrant. So the story, being unique, caught on. It survives, even though the fire hydrant's connection to Illinois' Old Capitol is shaky. Cavanaugh says, on page 79, that the fire hydrant made by the Eddy Valve Co. of Waterford, N.Y. was modeled after the U.S. Capitol dome.

"The self-conscious manufacturer," Cavanaugh writes, "aware that function was insufficient and that even a hydrant might bask in reflected glory, endowed the utilitarian object with a symbol of singular prestige — the ribbed dome of the U.S. Capitol."

How that relates to our Capitol dome is apparently conjecture on Cavanaugh's part. He says the D.C. dome, remodeled in the 1850s, just might have been modeled after the Illinois capitol, built in 1837.

That's a long stretch, but it's a good story and has been kept alive in Springfield for almost 40 years.

### LINCOLN'S CHAIR ROCKS BY ITSELF

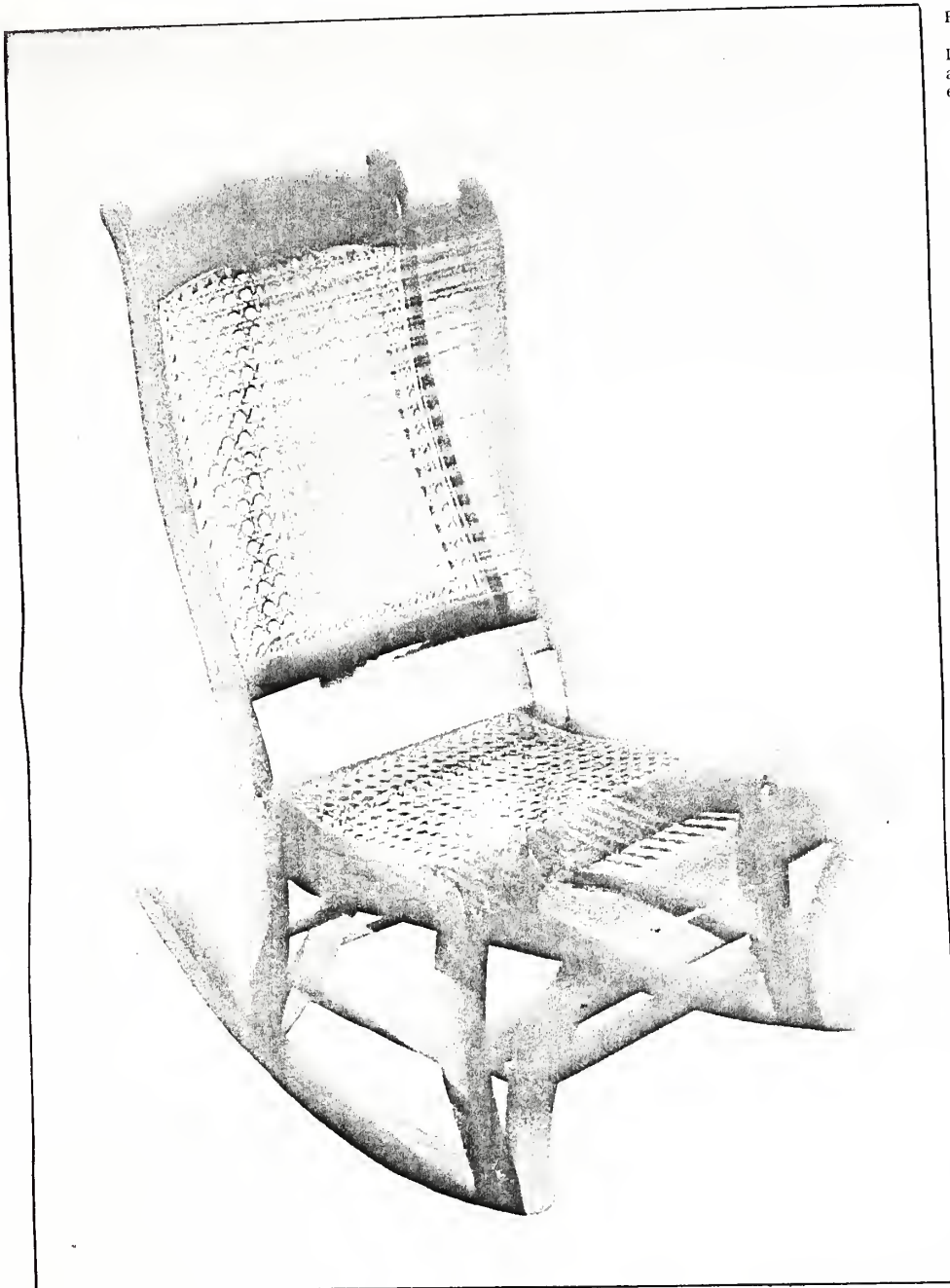
In 1976, Shirlee Laughlin, an employee at the Abraham Lincoln Home, reported that sometimes Lincoln's old rocking chair moved when there was nobody in it.

"At times the rocking chair rocks," Laughlin said, "and you can feel wind rushing down the hall though the windows are shut tight."

"I was rearranging the furniture in (Mary Todd Lincoln's) bedroom not long ago, trying to decide whether to move a small chair into another room. Something — someone — kept touching me on the shoulder. I kept looking around, but no one was there. I left that chair right where it was."

Laughlin no longer works at the Lincoln Home and site superintendent Jim O'Toole says he's never heard the legend about the chair. But he has heard the one about the clock.

"The one I used to hear," O'Toole says, "was that there was a clock that was believed to have stopped at the same moment as Lincoln's death. When I got here, the clock was stopped at the exact time that Lincoln died. But we



Abraham Lincoln's rocking chair.

State Journal-Register/Greg Mellis



found out later that the clock was made in 1941."

Poet Vachel Lindsay may have claimed that "Lincoln Walks at Midnight," but nobody at the Lincoln home has seen him at midnight or at any other time.

"We have park rangers who patrol the neighborhood at night," O'Toole says. "No one has ever seen Lincoln walk at midnight. No one's ever seen him in the home. He's never applied for a Golden Age Passport (for reduced entrance fee)."

## THE TERM "SHODDY WORKMANSHIP" ORIGINATED HERE

In 1878, Frank Godley opened a shoddy mill in Springfield. "Shoddy" is the term for a poor grade of cloth made of reclaimed wool.

The story goes that the Springfield mill supplied blankets to the army and that the blankets were of such poor quality that Springfield became known for its "shoddy workmanship."

Not true, says Ed Russo of the Sangamon Valley Collection. The making of shoddy extends back to ancient England. Shoddy was shoddy before Springfield even existed.

"Probably every town that ever had a shoddy mill thinks the term started in their town," Russo says. "But we still get inquiries from local people who think the term started here."

Godley's mills, by the way, burned down twice. In response, he built one out of brick. He had had enough of shoddily-built mills.

## THE TURNING ANGEL

For 30 or 40 years, people in Springfield have been talking about a statue of an angel at Calvary Cemetery. At midnight, the story goes, the statue turns on its pedestal.

Management at the cemetery is reluctant to talk about the statue — not because they think there's anything supernatural about it, but because they fear vandalism.

"It's a beautiful statue, but it has been mutilated over the years," says a Calvary employee who refused to be identified. "They've broken off arms and fingers when we're not looking."

Nobody knows how the story of the turning angel got started.

"That, I think, is old Springfield lore," says the employee. "There are older people who come in here and talk about that myth being around when they were





# LOCAL DESK MAY BE OLDEST U.S. 'POST OFFICE'

Used In 1823, Now Owned  
By City Woman.

By W. O. GERMAN

Probably the oldest "post office" in existence in the United States is in Springfield. Not only did it do duty for Springfield, but it served patrons for miles around, and was the post office as well for Fort Clark, where Peoria is now located. The difficulties the pioneers had in communicating with each other is illustrated in the following history of the past.



Down in Kentucky during the War of 1812, one Thomas Iles was sheriff and his son, Elijah, served as his deputy. When Elijah, in 1820, had accumulated sufficient capital he decided to leave Kentucky and seek his fortune in Illinois, glowing accounts of which had been rife for more than a quarter of a century—stories of its broad prairies and fertile soil.

He finally located in Springfield (at that time better known as Kellyville or Callhoun) and opened the first store. It was a miniature department store, a log building sixteen feet square, on the southeast corner of Second and Jefferson streets. This was in June, 1821.

## Named Postmaster In 1823.

Two years later Iles was appointed postmaster, and he immediately set about to provide a suitable "post office." This consisted of a walnut stand, 24x24, and 28 inches high, stoutly built. It had one little slide-drawer which was more than enough space to hold the amount of mail received in that period. Before the opening of the post office, the settlement had received mail only occasionally from Edwardsville, about eighty miles by wagon trail.

When a batch of mail arrived the names were called out to whom addressed. If the recipient were present, he or she paid the postage, according to weight. Those who were not present were notified by their neighbors that there was a missive at the post office for them.

Letters were not encased in envelopes at that time, but were folded down and up and turned under at both ends, forming the shape of an envelope. Upon one side the address was written; on the other a seal was placed by those who possessed one. The scarcity of seals may

account for postmasters' knowing so much about community affairs in those days.

## Settled At Indian Point.

Oct. 1, 1823, on the advice of Mr. Iles, James Williams left Kentucky with his wife and seven of his eight children. On Nov. 10, 1823, they arrived at Indian Point, where they settled. Their oldest son, John, a lad of 14, came the following year, reaching his new home in October of 1824, and began clerking for Mr. Iles, filling the position of assistant postmaster, the first to fill that important post in Springfield.

In 1826, Mr. Iles was elected state senator from Sangamon county and resigned from the postmastership. The business of the post office was closed by Mr. Williams and final settlement with the government was made by him, as Major Iles was in Vandalia, the state capital at that time.

In 1830, Mr. Williams purchased the store from the major, who retained the "post office." The desk later descended to George Williams, the son of Col. John Williams. It is now in possession of his wife, Mrs. George Williams, 715 South Douglas avenue, with the following chronology:

## Chronology Is Quoted.

"Maj. Elijah Iles opened the first letter store in Springfield in June, 1821. In 1823 he was appointed the first postmaster. Previous to 1823, the nearest post office was at Edwardsville, about eighty miles, and mails came only occasionally by freighters and by travelers to Springfield.

"Col. John Williams came from Kentucky in 1824 and became a clerk in the store October 11. He attended to the mail and so was the first mail clerk. This table was the only desk in the first store and first post office.

"John Williams purchased the business from Elijah Iles in 1830, and this table has been in possession of the family since that time. This table is unique in that it is the first business desk, the first post office desk, the first desk used by the first storekeeper, the first desk used by the first postmaster, the first desk used by the

postal clerk and the first desk used by the first store clerk.

"Mail over this desk has been delivered to patrons as far north as Fort Clark, now Peoria."

